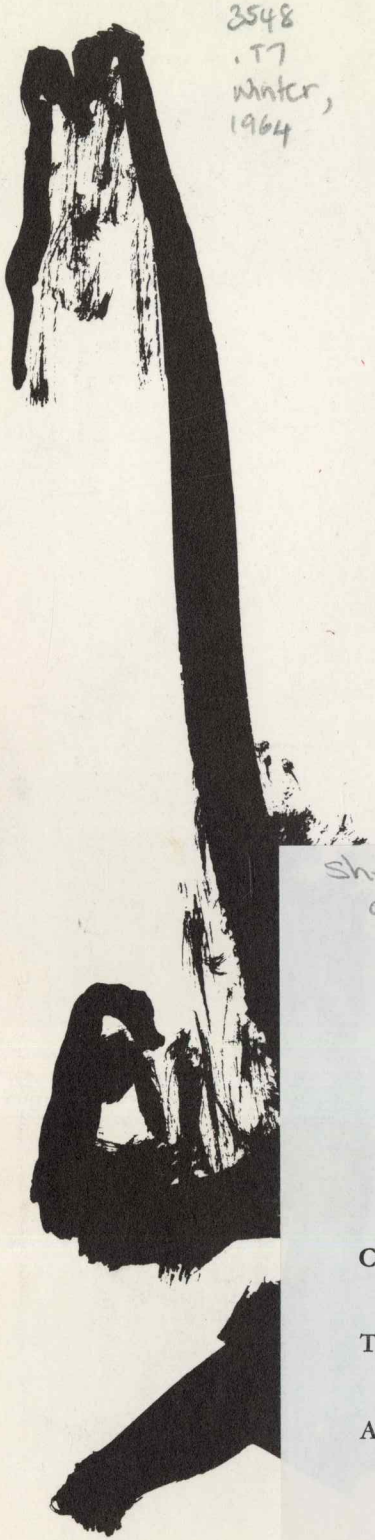
the tower
Alabama College
Montevallo, Alabama

Archive
LD
3548
.T7
Winter,
1964



STAFF

Tracy Metclaf
Editor

Marilyn Landers
Associate Editor

James Ray
Managing Editor

Anne Shepard
Art Editor

Marty Phillips
Collection Editor
(Campus Representative)

Class Collectors
Freshman—Clan Phillips
Sophomore/Junior—Linda Pearson
Junior/Senior—Kay Hayden

Typists
Pugs Douglass
Judy Gibbs

Shelve in Secretary's office

LIBRARY

ALABAMA COLLEGE

MONTEVALLO, ALA.

Class R Ala 808 Author Alabama College

Title The tower, 1964

Accession 88415 v.61

POEMS

Triolets ..... Jo Anne Lancaster
Four "Haiku" Poems ..... Margaret Sarah Hearn
To—— ..... Thomas Hubert
Dreams, Silenced ..... Jo Anne Lancaster
Run, Jump, and Shout Little Boys! ..... Thomas Hubert
Seascape ..... Martha Folmar
The Marsh Called Treachery ..... Margaret Sarah Hearn
Morning Where A Forest Once Stood ..... Thomas Hubert
Poem ..... Martha Folmar
This House ..... Margaret Sarah Hearn
Calling Drums ..... Jack Mayhall
Reminiscence or Late Lament ..... Thomas Hubert
Haiku III, IV, V, VI ..... Martha Folmar

SHORT STORIES

The Missing Link in Delmer Rhodes
by Joy Brantley

The Persimmon Tree
by Jim Morgan

A12
R
808
A316
Ev.6J

TRIOLETS

Whispers wish for happiness
Suspended at a gate.
Thrusting bits of weightlessness,
Whispers wish for happiness;
Weighing puffs of nothingness
On scales of faery weight,
Whispers wish for happiness
Suspended at a gate.

Faeries dance on daffodils—
Who sees must look, they say.
Wander, Aengus, over hills but
Faeries dance on daffodils.
Magic flits in children's mills
And fireflies lead the way while
Faeries trip on daffodils.
Who sees, must look — they say

"Il faut mourir a une vie pour entrer dans une autre."
Le Crime de Sylvestre Bonnard
par Anatole France

—Jo Anne Lancaster

FOUR "HAIKU" POEMS

#1
Opposing sides
of a single coin are soulmates;
each measures the other.

#2
Ineffable music
in restless blood stirs the soul
with both fire and thirst.

#3
The roar of silence,
the crying sound, wails of lost
ones knowing torment.

#4
The hollow, black pit
gaps wide and compelling and
it is ever waiting.

—Margaret Sarah Hearn

88415

TO--

My soul in search of Beauty vainly tries
To learn if your fair visage gently lies;—
'Tis hard to mark, with Beauty grown within,
Where God leaves off and you yourself begin.

—Thomas Hubert

DREAMS, SILENCED

White sands reaching endlessly
Sift children's castles, carelessly—
    Stirring dreams they built,
    Shifting spires a-tilt.

So, Childhood laughs—silently.
His hopeful eyes watch—sightlessly,
The sand-shod dream. Lost—hopelessly.

    Silence is eternity.

—Jo Anne Lancaster

RUN, JUMP, AND SHOUT LITTLE BOYS!

Run, jump, and shout little boys!
Wrestle with one another on the lawn.
For some day you will be old men
And scorn the echoes of your noise.

—Thomas Hubert

SEASCAPE

Tiny seashells littered the lonely shore.
They were scattered in bits and sharp
Broken pieces, the whole among the shattered,
Their clicking collision unheard above the ocean roar.

Just above their speckled graves, between sand
Dunes and the sea, like marks on a treasure map,
Were fragmentary footprints, some filled
In by the waves like little lakes after a rain.

These together wandered, made a colony
Here and there where they had stopped
To select a pretty shell, and, almost reluctant,
Continued on the seaweed rim, a brown filigree.

Behind a dune the little path of prints wavered,
Became a scuffled sandmire of sharp
Little footmarks and sprawling ones two bodies make,
An oasis of disturbance where love's mead was savored.

Now the sea begins to climb upward
To the dunes and erases all the traces
Of the two who passed along the shore,
Leaving only the dunesand, wind-effaced afterward.

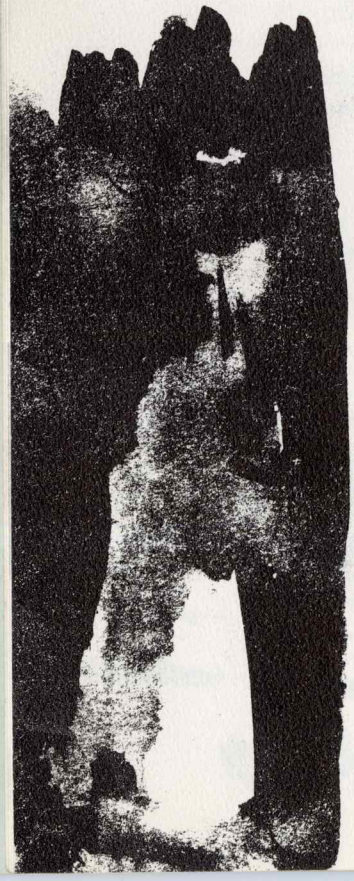
—*Martha Folmer*

THE MARSH CALLED TREACHERY

Of all the earth's surfaces, the marshes retain
Most their primeval qualities. Twilight winds
Ever shriek; trees thresh about madly, the se- seeks death
And thunderously leaps again, again for sand
To bank and, thus, contain it. Worse,
Still, trees oft fall so silent; grass oft ceases
Its sighs; a silence, immemorial, apathetic
And timeless, greedily grabs the cringing land.

The marshes are ever inimical to humans. The marshes
Let in the sea and years later when the people
Grew used to making use of it, the sea
Retreated. And what remained there? Not reefs
Of coral and grottos, but ugly things. Wrecks, bones,
And bleached white skeletons, rotting spars.
Foes, Friends.

—Margaret Sarah Hearn



MORNING WHERE A FOREST ONCE STOOD

Where I now stand, there once a forest stood;
Where I now stand there should
Be tree, trees standing tall and singing
Their yellow, crimson echoes ringing
Along the pregnant fields and streams.

But now the woods lie low it seems:
The browning trees, rudely hacked supine,
Stare at me and cry, "Was that hatchet thine?"
But I just winced and walk away.
The morning's air was blear and gray.

—Thomas Hubert

POEM

Bright came the dusk and shadow
Flowing thickly over under and in.
Softly in patterns glowing,
It twined close as liquid in glossy snow,
Like a flutter of lunar moths.
Now in the deep garden footsteps came,
Pacing measured and slow.
They were lost in a dark like rain.

Great leaves hung low
In white sunlight flicker where blossom smothered,
Where the scent of magnolia
Drifted through the stifling where they hovered.
Don't go she said, sifting the fine small tears.
I must he answered, and walked away down the years.

—Martha Folmer

THIS HOUSE

This is the house where a tiny white-crowned lady
Lived and loved; under that snowball tree, she walked
With happy, smiling children. Here in this house,
She humbly worshipped her God by day and night.
That bed held her fragile form and saw the children,
Kissing her smooth cheek. There, in a sunny corner,
She lavished her care on roses, exquisite roses.
Here burrowed in the warm and fragrant grass,
I lay grieving until the scent of roses came
Caressing me with the memories of carefree days.

—Margaret Sarah Hearn

88415

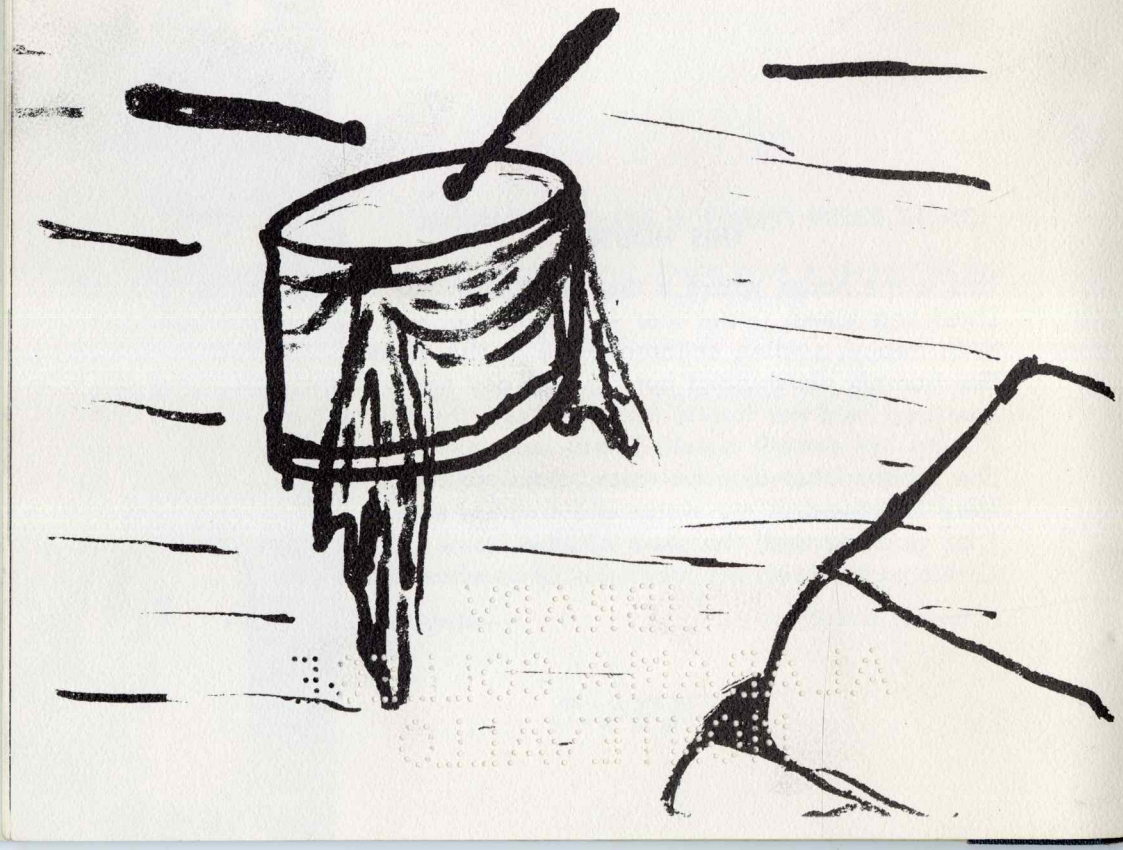
CALLING DRUMS

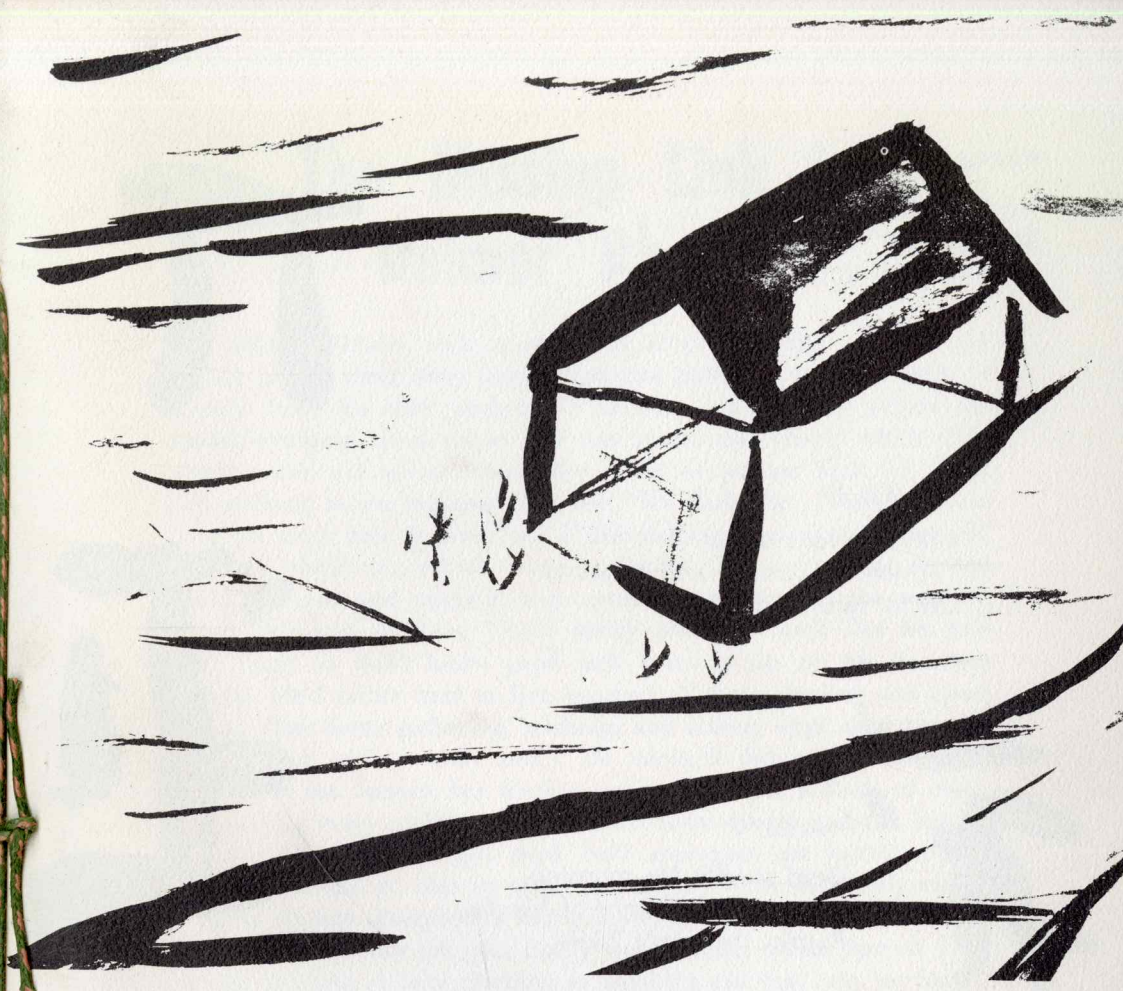
Death — the drums are playing death.
The call is out, the spirit sounds
And death draws nearer yet.

Look there! Back and on your side
It crawls and then it runs
Faster, faster is the pace
And life draws nearer end.

The end is yet to come — I say.
And all stand straight and call:
But on the morrow — you may hear
The drums of death — there call.

—Jack Mayhall





REMINISCENCE OR LATE LAMENT

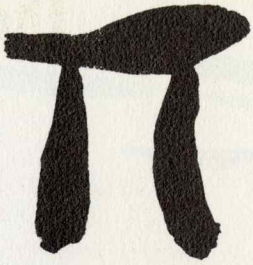
I heard a Greyhound bus
Outside the house today:
Hissing, grunting to a stop;
and then
Hissing, grunting as it started again
On its angry, grumbling way:
Leaving a sharp, portentous
Smell. I pictured my grandmother
Walking bear-like
Up the sidewalk
Come for another
Stay with us.

But she didn't get off that bus today;
Grandmother, Grandmother is dead.

—Thomas Hubert

HAIKU III

Into her dark dream
Softness like tigerlily
Diffuses with gold.



HAIKU IV

Rain flattens a leaf
Which but waxes and thickens
With returning light.

HAIKU V

Gold shades his morning,
Whitegold the light of his day,
Purple the god's night.

HAIKU VI

Black and vermeil doors
Panelled with cupids in flight
Stand secure in locks.

—Martha Folmer

The Missing Link in Delmer Rhodes

Delmer Rhodes took a toothpick from the jelly glass in the middle of the table, then put it back and pulled a crumpled pack of *Camels* from his shirt pocket. He lit one, and greedily gulped the smoke, avoiding Novie's eyes. She was announcing crisply which child would wash and which would dry when he pushed back his chair, and walking to the window observed, "It's dark, Mr. Johnson should have the truck here by now." As if this statement prompted a thought, Delmer's oldest son asked, "How was your first day at the factory, Dad?" Delmer said nothing, and continued to gaze out the window. Novie answered for him, "Your daddy naturally don't like his new job, 'cause he don't know good luck when it sits on his doorstep, Arnold. He'd rather tend to five hundred chickens; feeding and cleaning up after them, gathering, washing, and crating eggs, than to hold a decent job with a steady salary. He thinks it dishonorable to run a machine at the factory, but it's honorable to pamper a flock of chickens, praying every night they won't catch some disease and die, leaving all of us bankrupt! You'd think he'd appreciate the factory people thinking enough of him to offer him a job, when everybody else is begging for one. Everybody's beginning to see they can't make a living farming neither. But no, your daddy would rather we all starved while he tries to farm, or raise chickens, or anything else that suits his fancy."

A truck pulled up the hill and Delmer watched the headlights swing into the yard. The children scrambled out the door to talk to Mr. Johnson, manager of a feed mill, and Delmer's sponsor in the egg business.

Delmer turned from the window to Novie, who still sat at the cluttered table. Quietly he remarked, "First the farm, now the chickens. Looks like a man can't make a decent living no more." Neither his voice nor his face showed any emotion other than passive acceptance. Novie knew he would give up the chickens as he had given up the farm, with resignation. Pulling her face tight, she spoke with a hint of malice in her voice, "You accept everything sooner or later, Delmer, you're a God-fearing, hard-working, peace-loving man." The words were true, she didn't know why she tried so hard to make them sting.

Her words had no effect upon him. His broad shoulders slumped no more than usual, the gentle expression on his large sun-reddened face did not harden. He looked down at his big coarse hands and flex-

ed their swollen joints under the harsh light of a low-hanging bulb. Then he took a deep breath and spoke in a low voice.

"I've tried to explain it to you, Novie, I just can't be satisfied setting all day at some damn machine that sews the sleeves into women's blouses. I like to git out in the open, and work hard. When I'm paid I like to feel satisfaction in knowing it took hard work and thinking to earn it. You got to figure a little to make a good crop, or to make chickens lay all the eggs they can. But you ain't got to think to run a God damn machine and you don't even git tired enough to sleep good at night. You don't have nothing to wait for. You can't hope that if you're a little smarter next year, you'll be able to make more money from sewing blouses. You can't watch blouses grow; you can't care for them and you can't harvest them."

Desperation creeped into the slow, quiet voice as he spoke. "When the farm went under I thought the chickens was an answer." Novie was not listening, but was loudly rattling dishes in the sink as if trying to drown out the familiar words. Delmer slowly got up and left the kitchen.

Outside Mr. Johnson had backed the truck up to the door of the long, low chicken house, and was lifting the tarpaulin from the back-gate. He watched Delmer approach, and explained that he hadn't been able to find any colored men to help catch, but if Delmer's older boys would help, they should be enough. He paused and added, "Delmer, I know you hate to give up the egg business, but I think you've made the right decision. Naturally it's not good business for me, I've already lost most of the houses I had set up around here. Folks just can't make money at it no more."

Delmer nodded, and he continued, "Yeah, it was a big business while it lasted, just like farming. We thought we was up with them damn industrialists this time . . . eggs on mass production . . . me furnishing the chickens and feed, you raising them, and us splitting the profit. We just didn't think about the egg market dropping with big production, just like the cotton or corn market, or anything else. We can't keep up with it, Delmer, might as well give it up."

He had finished lifting the tarpaulin, and climbing into the truck, he began dropping down large crates with sides of wooden bars. Delmer watched the crates drop to the ground, trying not to think of squashing hens into them. When the crates were unloaded, Delmer sent the younger children to the house, since the chickens were excitable and the children would want to help with the catching if they stayed.

Then he, Mr. Johnson and the two older boys entered the quiet dark chicken house. A general smell of wood shavings, chicken droppings, feed and warm feathers met them as they opened the door.

Sleeping chickens covered the long floor like a lumpy white sheet. There were small sounds of rustling feathers, soft sleepy cluckings, and webbed feet scratching, to find deeper warmth in the shavings.

Mr. Johnson turned to the boys and whispered, "Now just start grabbing, get them around the legs, and get as many as you can at one time. Get them as fast as you can 'cause when you start grabbin', there's gonna be a pile of panicky chickens."

With this he stopped and quietly clutched the legs of a sleeping hen, then two more. The boys did the same, and with three dangling from each hand, ran and threw them in a crate. The quietness was broken by their flapping and squawks, and the chickens began to push, fly and tumble toward the farther end of the building. Delmer drew a deep breath and followed them, grabbing the beating wings and scratching claws as gently as possible. He felt the animal panic in the air, and felt a strange, maddening panic rise within him. He mumbled as he grabbed legs, wings, and necks, running back and forth, "God damn stupid bastards, be still! Stupid chickens, you'd think we was trying to kill you!"

Chickens were everywhere, covering the air, bumping on the low ceiling, the screen walls, feeders and waterers. Delmer's anger increased to rage as they whirled, squawked and rushed through the dark. He felt nothing but strong capable fingers, gripping soft scaly necks, kicking legs, scratching claws and beating wings. Then he felt hot liquid as his fingers broke feathers and soft skin under the wings. Joints cracked on skinny legs as he swung birds into crates. The blinding rage flowed like crushing power into his fingers, bringing strange, salty pleasure.

He was crushing, stomping, kneading everything he had tried to build into the clean wood shavings. Looking toward the shavings, he saw nothing but feathers, overturned feeders and white piles of cowering chickens along the shadowy walls.

Looking down he saw that the heel of his shoe rested on the neck of a dead hen. The body jerked and the legs kicked the shavings spasmodically. He turned on the heel, grinding the neck into the shavings, and saw Mr. Johnson and his sons peering through the dark in his direction..

Delmer threw back his head and laughed deeply and loudly, and still laughing, strode from the hen house, across the yard and ran up the steps, two at a time. Slamming the screen he entered the kitchen. Novie was washing clothes in the sink. Without turning she said, "Ya'll made pretty good time catching." Delmer walked across the kitchen smiling, and slapped her hard skinny bottom with a swift up-hand stroke. She whirled and stared at him, completely astonished.

Then she saw his hands, red with deeper red dried ridges along the knuckles and around the nails. Small soft feathers, clung to the fingers. He looked down, still smiling, flexed his fingers rapidly, and said, "Yep, that's that, hurry up with them clothes, I'm gonna turn in."

Joy Brantley

The Persimmon Tree

Roosevelt pulled his smoking bag from the deep protective pocket within his overalls and laid it down on a smooth stretch of log beside him. He pushed his time-polished hand deep into his right pocket and felt for the safety matches secreted there. Once inside the pocket, his hand remained motionless and he gazed out through the tall pines.

His hand reappeared, within it the matches. He laid them down beside the smoking bag and drew his legs in further toward him. He picked up the raveled bag and glanced at the ever-growing hole in its side. A shake brought the tobacco down to the corner in an accessible clump.

The two small boys seated opposite him watched with unfeinted admiration as his fingers molded a cigarette from the delicate white paper and coarse pipe tobacco.

The larger of the two boys opened his mouth to show a shiney grin of anticipation and said, "Unke Roosevelt, tell James Sydney that story of youse 'bout de two tenants dat was made to move."

Roosevelt licked the cigarette into being and slowly rolled it between his fingers. He looked at the inquisitive face of the smaller boy and spoke with a short smile, "You done heard dat story, ain't you Sammy?"

"No sah. I never heard no story, 'bout no tenants dat had to move."

Roosevelt pulled his pants leg tight and flicked the match against it. The cigarette lit, he hunched over and enjoyed the first flavorable breaths of smoke, before he spoke.

"Well, de story starts out a long time ago, 'fore you was here, and eben for I's here. You see, der was dis man who built a big, fine new tenant house. And it was the nicest one around. It had a deep well, peach trees in de back, and a big bunch of grapevines on one side an' de 'hole land was so rich n' sweet dat it was never no work to have plenty to eat.

"Well, de man went an' got him two tenants. He put dem up in de house and geb um all dey needed to see um through de winter. He eben tol 'um dat dey could plant what dey want to.

"Now dis man he had some persimmon trees dat was growin' out south of de house and dey really was good trees. De man used to come out there n' worry wid dem 'simmon trees 'til it was too dark to see. De man he told dem tenants dat he didn't mind 'um eatin' none dem crops 'cept dem' simmons, 'cause dey was his. Well, dem two tenants heard him good and dey was real careful not to eat none of dem 'simmons.

"So things went along real good for 'bout a year and den the woman's cosin came to leb wid 'um. Now dis cosin of her's was a real sassy fella, n' everybody said dat he was a bad nigger and wouldn't have anything to do wid him. At fust he done his share of work, but den he done more n' more of nothin' n' eat more den ever. Now de man didn't like dis cosin and especially didn't like haben to do two man's work. So he done told de cosin dat he could only eat so much n' no more. Well, de cosin didn't say much but after that he stayed gone most of de time n' neber did complain 'bout not gettin' nuf to eat.

"Now after a while de man got to wondin' why dat cosin done shut his mouth 'bout de food. So one day he come out n' asked him why it was dat he waren't eatin' heavy like he usta. Well, dat cosin said dat he waren't goin' hungry 'cause he done been eatin' dem 'simmons down south of the house.

"Well, he got real mad at de cosin for eatin' dem 'simmons 'cause he knew dat it would make the Boss mad at him. De cosin said dat he only been eatin' dem 'simmons dat was on top of de tree n' dat de Boss wouldn't miss none no how. De woman took up fer de cosin n' said dat dat was right, dat de Boss wouldn't miss none n' dat she been eatin' um too.

"Now dis was two peoples to one, so de man didn't say nothin' else 'bout it. But in 'bout a week he was down south of de house n' dem 'simmons began to look powerful good to him. He decided dat

he'd just eat one to see what dey taste like. But dem 'simmons was so good dat he done eat a quart 'fore he knowed what he's doin'. He told his woman dat he done it n' de woman say dat it was all right n' dat de Boss wouldn't know no difference.

"Well, de next day de Boss come out der to work on dem 'simmon trees. He seen right off dat somebody done been eatin' his 'simmons so he went up to de house and looked for dem tenants of his. He didn't find 'um right off though 'cause dey done seen him comin' n' dey knew dat he would see de 'simmons gone 'n know who done it.

"Dat Bossman looked n' looked for dem niggers until he found dem out hidin' in de woodshed. He asked dem why dey was hidin' and dey said dat dey seen him comin' n' knew dat he'd know dat dey been eaten on his 'simmon trees n' dat dey's 'fraid dat he'd get mad at dem.

"He told dem dat he sure had found out and dat dey couldn't leb der no more. He told dem dat if dey worked for somebody else n' did good den dey could come back some time.

"So dey went n' got in de Bossman's truck n' went to de next county n' got another place. It waren't near as nice though n' dey had to work mighty hard to keep livin' at de new place.

"De cosin now, he done seen de Bossman too and instead of hidin' he lit out fer town. He got a job at a place where dey gambles n' drinks n' made lots of money."

With this Roosevelt dropped the scant butt of his departed cigarette to the ground and stepped on it with his boot. The larger boy looked at him and said, "Well Unke Roosevelt, did dem two people ever make it back to dat place?"

Roosevelt leaned slightly forward and spoke slowly, "No, dem people never did work hard enough, dey still workin' over at dat other place."

There was a long pause, and then Sammy, his quizzical expression seemingly molded to his face, spoke.

"Unke Roosevelt, what does dat story mean? Don't it ever end?"

"No, it don't ever end Sammy, it just goes on fer de longest."

Sammy, still unsatisfied, said, "Well, what do it mean?"

Roosevelt slid apart his lips in a small grin as he said, "Well, I guess it means don't ever eat on no 'simmon tree dat don't belong to you."

And Sammy laughed as they all got up and headed for the house.

Jim Morgan